

THE FISH HAWK HERALD



Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the National Audubon Society
www.cdaudubon.org

December 2008

VOLUME 18 ISSUE 3

BOARD MEETING

DATE: December 3, Wednesday
TIME: 4:30 p.m.
PLACE: Mt. West Bank
125 Ironwood Dr.

DECEMBER PROGRAM

DATE: Dec—ember 3, Wednesday
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE Lutheran Church of the Master
4800 North Ramsey
SPEAKER: Kris Buchler
PROGRAM: "Audubon Christmas Bird Counts Want You!!" Kris and Audubon members will help novices learn where to find birds. The Christmas Counts need eyes and ears of all ages to make the Coeur d'Alene Counts a success. You may go into the field with a team, or stay home and count at your bird feeders. Learn what you can do to contribute!

AND

A COOKIE EXCHANGE: This is how it works: everyone who brings two dozen cookies gets to take home (or eat) two dozen cookies. Bring a container for your goodies☺.

CHRISTMAS PARTY POTLUCK

Dec. 14th,--- about 4:30 p.m., after the Christmas Bird Count. Everyone welcome whether you went on the bird count or not. Please bring food to share.
Hosts: Jan and Herb Severtson, RSVP: 667-6209 Directions---call Jan or Herb

YARD LISTS

Turn your yard list into Lisa Hardy at basalt@earthlink.net during the month of January

Visit our Web Site:
www.cdaudubon.org

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Ed Buchler

As a result of the election, if tradition holds true, we can expect a government that will be more sensitive and responsive to the wide spectrum of critical environmental and conservation issues that impact us nationally and globally. The message below was sent to chapter leaders by John Flicker, President of the National Audubon Society, on 5 November.

ELECTION RESULTS BRING CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITY AND NEED FOR ACTION

Statement of Audubon President and CEO John Flicker following the election of President-elect Obama and the new Congress.

"Voters in this historic election cast their ballots not only for change, but for a new era of hope for our environment, and the people, birds, and other wildlife that depend on it. Washington has been ignoring critical environmental issues for too long. President-elect Barack Obama and a more environmentally aware Congress offer the promise of leadership and fundamental change that could usher in new protections for America's great natural heritage, and a new lease on life for species in decline.

Despite real reason for optimism, we cannot take conservation gains for granted. Audubon is committed to helping the new Administration and Congress to live up to their great promise; and to make conservation, clean energy and green jobs part of America's path to a brighter tomorrow.

Through our local Chapters, state offices and national grass roots efforts, Audubon will join with others in the environmental community to ensure that our newly elected leaders lead the way on issues vital to our environment, our economy and diversity of life on Earth.

Issues demanding prompt attention include:

Presidential Appointments:

- President-elect Obama should start by appointing to key environmental positions within his Administration qualified leaders who will defend our clean air and water, protect habitat and endangered species, aggressively address global warming, and steward our great natural heritage for future generations.

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ELECTION RESULTS ... CONTINUED

Scientific Integrity:

- The Department of the Interior should systematically review and reverse decisions made by the past Administration under the Endangered Species Act that were influenced by political considerations and not based on sound science.
- President-elect Obama should send a clear signal to everyone in his administration to restore and respect scientific integrity in all environmental decisions.

Global Warming and Renewable Energy:

- President-elect Obama has said that: "We cannot afford more of the same timid politics when the future of our planet is at stake." He's right. We welcome the opportunity to help him deliver his promised \$150 billion plan for clean energy technologies that would protect our environment and stimulate the economy, creating up to 5 million new green jobs.
- The Congress should pass legislation providing significant incentives for development of renewable energy such as a strong Renewables Portfolio Standard and a long-term extension of the Production Tax Credit, and pass significant legislation to address global warming with a comprehensive cap-and-trade program.
- The new Administration and Congress must lead a transformation in American energy production and use through investments in energy efficiency and clean energy technologies. This can minimize the fluctuation of gas prices while protecting our beaches, coastal ecosystems and the Alaskan landscape from the threats of oil and gas drilling.

Endangered Species Conservation:

- We'll work with the Administration to secure reversal of the Bush administration's weakening of the Endangered Species Act, such as the controversial decision to allow agencies to self-consult regarding the impacts of federally-approved projects on endangered species.
- Congress should pass new tax incentives to encourage private landowners to work toward recovery of endangered species.

Bird and Habitat Conservation:

- The Administration and the Congress should reinvest in the National Wildlife Refuge

System and address the unacceptable \$3.5 billion maintenance backlog crippling this critical tool for conservation.

- The Congress should pass legislation to conserve neotropical migratory birds and address the steep declines in America's common birds that are disappearing from parks, farms, and backyards across the country.

Ecosystem Restoration:

- The Administration and the Congress should fund significant new restoration projects to improve the status of America's great natural ecosystems: The Mississippi River, the Everglades, Long Island Sound, and the Great Lakes."

Now in its second century, Audubon connects people with birds, nature and the environment that supports us all. Our national network of community-based nature centers, chapters, scientific, education, and advocacy programs engages millions of people from all walks of life in conservation action to protect and restore the natural world.

KINGFISHER TOURS

Go to: www.KingfisherBirdTours.com

John Shipley, a past member of the Coeur d'Alene Audubon Chapter now living in Bozeman, has just announced his tours for 2009. I highly recommend his tours. They are small groups, very well run and his enthusiasm for showing you new birds is contagious. (S. Sturts)

Tour Schedule

| <u>Tours</u> | <u>Dates</u> |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | 2009 |
| Ecuador—Andes | February 14-26 (Sold Out) |
| Pelee Island, Canada | May 3-9 |
| Pelee Island, Canada | May 10-16 |
| Pelee Island, Canada | May 17-23 |
| Pelee Island, Canada | May 24-30 |
| Ecuador—Andes | November 8-20 |
| Ecuador—Andes | December 27-January 8, 2010 |

CONTROLLING WOODPECKER DAMAGE

Ed Buchler



We've received occasional inquiries over the past several years asking how to get woodpeckers to stop drilling holes in the sides of houses. This is often done by the Northern Flicker, but almost any of our other local species can also be guilty of this destructive habit. I abstracted the information below from a paper by Pat Leonard that originally appeared in the August 2007 issue of the *Journal of Wildlife Management*.

**Fuertes
Collection**

In some cases, the birds are attracted to the structure because it is infested with ants or carpenter bees. First, rid the house of the insect pests and the woodpeckers will likely leave. Homes with vinyl or aluminum siding or those painted and sealed with light colors are less likely to be attacked than homes with dark colors or natural siding such as cedar.

In the study, six deterrents were tested in an effort to decrease woodpecker visits: plastic owls with paper wings, reflective streamers, plastic eyes strung on fishing line, a sound system that broadcasted woodpecker distress calls followed by the call of a hawk, roost boxes and suet feeders. The woodpeckers presumably don't like the proximity of

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other birds that are attracted to the last two test items.

Only the reflective streamers worked with any consistency. The reflections and movement completely eliminated damage at half of the 16 test sites. Attempts at dousing the area with ammonia, hanging aluminum foil strips and dangling compact discs on strings also failed.

One *caveat*, nothing works all of the time. Also, not all advertised solutions have been adequately tested under field conditions. Anyone who has this problem can purchase streamers at Wild Birds Unlimited or buy rolls of colored Mylar streamer at craft stores such as Michael's. If you have a problem, try this solution – and knock on wood!

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS

Lynn Sheridan



**Fuertes
Collection**

I saw my first Double-crested Cormorant in January of 2003 near Cougar Bay. It was swallowing a fish with its long neck stretched up and bulging. Now I see them all year long, in varying numbers, on logs and pilings off of the NIC beach. The more I've observed these interesting birds, the more I wanted to know about them. I decided to do some research and one day headed to the NIC Library.

The NIC Molstead Library has a good collection of books and magazines, including a set of "Birds of North America", which is kept in a locked room and is not on loan. This collection is published by the American Ornithologists Union and the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. It is housed in a series of 18 shelf boxes, each with 40 booklets with an index. They are not arranged alphabetically! There is a total of 716 booklets and one empty box, as if more booklets are to come. The first booklet, published in 1992, is on the Barn Owl. The most recent, published in 2002, is on the Dark-eyed Junco. The bird I wanted to research was #441, the Double-crested Cormorant.

Continued on page 4

...**CORMORANTS** - continued from Page 3

They are the only cormorant to live on inland waters as well as oceans. Migration is varied, as some are year long residents, while others will fly to the ocean, or south to the Gulf of Mexico, the Bahamas, Cuba, or Baja, Mexico.

They nest in trees or on various artificial structures. On islands, free of predators, they will nest on the ground. Nesting colonies are obvious by the large quantities of white guano down the tree or pole, and the smell of rotting fish. Three to four long blue eggs are laid. Chicks are hatched in about 30 days, with black skin. By 2 weeks they are covered by black woolly down. They can leave a ground nest in 4 weeks, but not fly until 6-8 weeks. Diving ability starts at 7 weeks. The oldest bird recorded lived 17 years, 9 months.

They breed along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers. Shirley tells me there is a nesting colony north of us on the Pend Oreille River near Usk, Washington. As many as 42 nests have been recorded.

Their numbers have fluctuated over the years, due to the same toxic chemicals that have decimated the Bald Eagle. Along with the eagle they have bounced back, although weak egg shells are still found in nests on the Great Lakes where pollution persists. (as of publication of this data in 1999).

Another danger they face is being shot by angry fishermen, and fish farmers because of their diet of fish. It is legal in some states to shoot them. They eat 250 different species of fish and crustaceans. They swim under water, using webbed feet, swallowing smaller prey as they go. They bring up the larger catch to eat with their bodies and neck erect. After feeding, they hold their wings to the side and do lots of wing flapping to dry their feathers.

In historical times, cormorant eggs were used for making soup, the flesh for humans and animals, and the skins for clothing. There are 5 subspecies. Adults only make an "urg-urg-urg" sound and the chicks chirp for food and hiss in defense.

I asked Shirley Sturts for Idaho records from a database she keeps. Double-crested Cormorant were first recorded in Idaho on the Clearwater River September 26, 1805, by Lewis and Clark. On September 19, 1894, several were reported by J.C. Merrill at Fort Sherman. There have been records of

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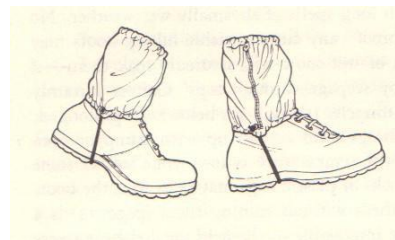
nesting colonies in Southern Idaho since the late 1930s. They arrive there in late March or early April. However, they have been considered rare in North Idaho until recently. Since 2001, we have had a small and growing resident population. We see more in the winter than in the summer, so we could be getting some migrants from further north. Shirley has been birding since the 1960s but didn't record a cormorant until January 10, 1981. It was sitting on a log boom in the Spokane River at Post Falls. Shirley's next sighting was on January 7, 1989 in Cougar Bay. However, she has scattered reports coming from Bonner and Boundary Counties. The first Coeur d'Alene Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was run in 1991. It was not until 2001 that we recorded our first cormorants, five of them. Their numbers have increased each year: 2002 (8), 2003 (17), 2004 (18), 2005 (32), 2006 (38), 2007 (35). The first recorded nesting for North Idaho was on July 13, 2003 in Cougar Bay. Don Johnson and Wayne Melquest took time out from the banding of Osprey to band 4 young cormorant chicks, 2 from each nest. This past July, 2008 they again found 2 nests with 2 chicks each but did not band them.

This is an interesting bird, with a variety of living and migrating patterns. Scientists and bird biologists will continue to study cormorant populations to come up with non-lethal methods of reducing the impact they have on fish numbers in some areas. The few we have at present in North Idaho should not create a problem.

MINERAL POINT HIKE

October 4, 2008

Janet Callen/Judy Waring



Nine birdwatchers and one dog spotted eight birds on the Mineral Point hike.

In our defense, it was raining, but rather than turn around and go home, everyone chose to do the short Mineral Point hike. The fungi were magnificent, and although we ended up rather damp, I believe everyone enjoyed the beautiful trail. The great views of Lake Pend Oreille were sometimes obscured by low-hanging clouds. We did choose not to walk around Lost Lake, however, because of the weather.



IDAHO BIRDING TRAIL SIGNS

See the article in our October/November issue about the Idaho Birding Trail Signs by Kris Buchler. In the October/November issue we featured the Red-naped Sapsucker sign that is going up in Mica Bay. This month's Bullock's Oriole sign will be going up in the CDA River Wildlife Management Area.

The text reads:

BULLOCK'S ORIOLE

A loud, whistled, joyful song announces the May return of this neotropical migratory songbird. Colorful in orange and black, the oriole has a long, pointed, straight bill perfectly shaped for picking insects off foliage of its favored cottonwoods and willows. It prefers streamside or edges of irrigation ditches but can be found in some surprisingly dry habitats.

An oriole nest is a complex marvel. It is a deep pouch woven of plant fibers and lined with hair, wool, and fine grasses. The opening is always at the top. The female may attach it to branches 6-60 feet above the ground. Occasionally, orioles are known to use man-made materials such as fishing line or string to weave their nests. Winter is the easiest time to see these sack-like nests when leaves have fallen from the trees.

Orioles are known for their "molt-migration." They leave the breeding territory early and migrate to the Southwest. There adults grow new feathers before continuing south to their wintering grounds in Mexico and Central America.

To learn more or to sponsor a sign, call Kris Buchler 664-4739 or Jenny Taylor 666-9898



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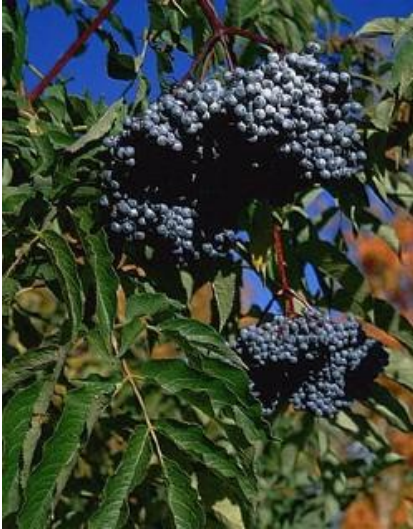
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PICK A PLANT - BLUE ELDERBERRY

(Sambucas cerulea)

Carrie Hugo



You might not have noticed this modest shrub growing on sunny open slopes or along moist creek bottoms until now. At this time of year, the blue berries dangling from thin branches stand out against the straw colored dry summer grasses and the changing leaves of autumn. In fact,

many elderberry shrubs in our area have lost most of their leaves, but the small blue berries remain on the plant just waiting to fill up the grumbling stomach of numerous local wildlife species.

Native Americans called the blue elderberry the "tree of music." They made flutes from blue elderberry branches cut in the spring and dried. Wood from the elderberry family was used for arrow shafts and in the manufacture of skewers and pegs. While raw elderberries are poisonous to humans and may cause nausea and vomiting, the cooked fruits of blue elderberries are very sweet and commonly used for jellies, jams, wines and pies.

The greatest value of blue elderberry is to wildlife. In summer, its flowers attract butterflies and hummingbirds. The ripe fruit is eaten by more than 43 species of birds, including the Mourning Dove, Wild Turkey, Ring-necked Pheasant, Northern Flicker, and Ruffed Grouse. Because the berries ripen in late summer and remain on the branches into the fall, this shrub provides a very valuable food source to numerous animals that are putting on the pounds in preparation for winter and migration. The bark and foliage are eaten by deer, chipmunks, rabbits, squirrels, mice and rats. Bears in particular love the ripe berries.

So next time you are out and about, scouting for elk, or admiring the changing colors of autumn, pick a few blue elderberries and take them home. Make

sure to cook them up before you eat them! Adding sugar won't be necessary. You could mix the compote into pancakes or slather the sweet, syrupy mix onto a bowl of vanilla ice cream. Just make sure to leave a few berries for the critters!

CHAIN LAKES FIELD TRIP

November 8, 2008

Lisa Hardy



Janet Callen and I started out birding the Cataldo area - Mission Slough, Hardy Loop, Hayden Loop, and River Road, and then checked out the Schlepp Ranch and Rose

Lake. Waterfowl numbers were low, though shallow water has started to collect in the farm fields along River Road, and at the Ducks Unlimited project at the Schlepp Ranch. Cloudy gray skies and an occasional drizzle promised a slow birding day until we were accosted by the irreverent vocalizations and vivid scarlet crest of a male Pileated Woodpecker, who treated us to an eye-level performance in which he attempted to chop down a cottonwood tree along Hardy Loop. Next, we found social flocks of American Robin and Cedar Waxwing feeding on fruit trees along Hayden Loop. We looked for Osprey at Mission Slough, but they all appeared to have left. Several Wood Duck remained in the area, though.

At the Schlepp Ranch, we walked the bike trail for a few miles. There were several hundred waterfowl on the shallow ponds, mostly Mallard, which all took to the air when an immature Bald Eagle flew over. A pair of adult eagles watched the scene from the branches of a tall cottonwood. Janet spotted a falcon perched in a lone cottonwood along the river bank. We set the scope on it, and were able to discern the bold facial markings of an adult Peregrine Falcon. After a few minutes, it took to flight, and we tracked its strong, rapid flight until it disappeared behind a line of trees.

Our last stop was Rose Lake. This is deeper water than what we had been scanning all morning, and it was here that we picked up some diverse divers, including two Common Loon, Horned and Western Grebes, and a Surf Scoter.

Our total species count was 37. It was good to get outside on such a mild November day.

See list of birds seen on the website newsletter

FIELD TRIPS 2008-2009

PLEASE REGISTER: Watch the website or newsletter for updates to our field trip schedule. Participants should contact the trip leader at least 24 hours in advance of the field trip to find out if the meeting place/time or destination has been changed. **Participants share in a mileage reimbursement for the driver (see President's message in the September Newsletter).**

MICA BAY SURVEY

DATES: December 9, Tuesday
TIME: 9:00 a.m. **MEET:** Fairmont Loop and Highway 95
LEADER: Shirley Sturts 664-5318
ACTIVITY: We spend about 3 hours once a month counting birds at Mica Bay. Everybody is welcome including beginner birders. We will help you with identification skills.

RATHDRUM PRAIRIE

DATE: November 22, Saturday
TIME: 8:30 a.m.
MEET: K-mart parking lot behind Mexican restaurant
LEADER: Roland Craft 457-8894
ACTIVITY: This is a half-day trip but sometimes is longer so bring lunch and water. We hope to find raptors, owls and upland birds before the prairie disappears.

EAGLE WATCH EVENTS

"Eagle Watch Week" – December 26 - January 1, 2009, 10:00a.m. to 4:00p.m.

Hosted by Bureau of Land Management.
 Locations – Wolf Lodge Bay – Mineral Ridge boat launch.
 Beauty Bay – Mineral Ridge trailhead.
 Volunteers from various agencies and Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society – spotting scopes and displays

For information contact Scott Robinson: 769-5048

"Eagle view" at Higgins Point – December 19, 20 & 21, 9:00a.m. to 3:00p.m.

Hosted by Idaho Parks and Recreation – staffed by rangers and volunteers

Location: Higgins Point
 Spotting scopes and hot beverages provided.

For information contact Jim Richards: 699-2224



Eagle viewing cruises – Contact Coeur d'Alene Lake Cruises for public cruises or special school cruises. Contact Beth Paragamian at IDFG (769-1414) for school cruises with an educational eagle program.

"Wings Over Wolf Lodge"

Eagle viewing cruises hosted by Birds of Prey Northwest. These include a program with Liberty, a live Bald Eagle
 Contact: Jane Cantwell, 208-245-1367 or www.birdsofpreynorthwest.org.
 Tickets for sale at Wild Birds Unlimited
 Date: December 7, Sunday. Two cruises, morning and afternoon.



Photo by Kris Buchler

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS DATES AND MEETING LOCATIONS

Coeur d'Alene - December 14, Sunday

Compiler: Shirley Sturts 664-5318
s.sturts@verizon.net
 Meet for Breakfast at 6:00 a.m. Michael D's Eatery or 7:00 a.m. to join your team

Spirit Lake - January 2, Friday

Compiler: Shirley Sturts 664-5318
s.sturts@verizon.net
 Meet for Breakfast at 6: a.m. Rustler's Roost, , Hayden Lake Highway 95 and Hayden Avenue, or 7:00 a.m. to join your team.

Indian Mountain - January 5, Monday

Compiler: Don Heikkila 659-3389 - donhei@imbis.net
 Team organizers Shirley Sturts 664-5318 - s.sturts@verizon.net and Lisa Hardy 783-1262 basalt@earthlink.net
 Meet and time - plans made will be made by each participating team

